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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/667,540	09/22/2003	Lawrence M. Boyd	1842-0024	9957
28078	7590	01/15/2009	EXAMINER	
MAGINOT, MOORE & BECK, LLP			PHILOGENE, PEDRO	
CHASE TOWER				
111 MONUMENT CIRCLE			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
SUITE 3250				3733
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204				
		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
		01/15/2009	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/667,540	BOYD ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Pedro Philogene	3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2008.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 81,82,84-91 and 93-96 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 81,82,84-91,93-96 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 81-82, 84-91,93-96 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boucher et al. (6,716,216).

With respect to the claims, Boucher et al disclose a kit of parts for sealably introducing fluent material directly into the disc space through an opening extending through the annulus fibrosis of the disc, comprising a tube (84,160) having a passageway (162) for the flow of fluent material (62) therethrough and an extend (160) adapted to be received in the opening of the annulus fibrosis, the tube having a seal (22) adapted to engage the annulus fibrosis adjacent the opening and to form a fluid-tight seal therewith, wherein the tube extend is defined by a distal tip of the tube, the distal tip being sized and configured to provide distraction of opposed vertebrae communicating with the disc space; and a quantity of curable fluent material (62) adapted to be introduced in a fluid state into the disc space through the passageway of the tube, the material upon curing having the properties substitutive of the nucleus pulposus, The seal is integral with the tube (84) and separable from the extend (160), the distal tip having at least one orifice (162), the distal tip is removable from the tube; there are a plurality of distal tips (120,160,164), a syringe (112).

With regard to the recitation that an element is “adapted to” or “configured to”, it is noted that it has been held the recitation that an element is “adapted to” or “configured to” perform a function is not a positive limitation but requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. Therefore, the distal tip of Boucher et al is sized and configured (tapered) to fully capable of distracting opposed vertebrae.

Response to Amendment

Applicant’s arguments, see Remarks, filed 10/24/08, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 81, 82, 84-91, 93-96 under 102 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Boucher et al. Applicant’s declaration to overcome the reference to Mathews, has been considered and noted by the examiner.

Conclusion

A shortened statutory period for reply to this action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Pedro Philogene whose telephone number is (571) 272-4716. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on (571) 272 - 4719. The fax phone

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Pedro Philogene/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3733
January 13, 2009